



Maj Gen Earnest O. Robbins II



Stay the Course

As the terrible events of September 11 sink in, I want to pass along some thoughts to the Air Force civil engineer family.

Everyone in the Air Force has been affected by these events. Blue-suiters, civilians, contractors and our families have suffered as we watched the almost surreal tragedies in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania replayed, discussed, debated, analyzed, etc., in the media, around the water cooler and across our own dinner tables. Everyone knows what happened — nobody knows why it happened — and worst of all, nobody knows when it might happen again.

Meanwhile, members of the civil engineer team continue to support our Air Force. Despite our grief and our concerns for our country and our fellow citizens, we continue to do whatever it takes to keep our installations safe and secure, while taking care of the important day-to-day functions which keep our installations operating.

Civil engineers are providing mission-critical support to Operations NOBLE EAGLE and ENDURING FREEDOM. We have also suffered the first casualty of these operations. MSgt Evander Andrews of the 366th Civil Engineer Squadron was killed in a construction accident while deployed to the Arabian peninsula on Oct. 10. Sergeant Andrews served 18 years in the Air Force. As we mourn the loss of one of our own, I'm reminded of the strong bonds of the Air Force civil engineer family and the contributions and sacrifices of all the men and women who proudly serve our nation. We will get through this together.

There's one particular segment of our civil engineer family I want to address — our fire protection professionals. During my 32 years in Air Force blue, all of them as a civil engineer officer, I've grown to admire and respect the special bond among members of the fire protection profession across the spectrum, whether they serve the military or the civilian community. That kind of universal comradeship comes, I suspect, from the shared commitment in the strongest possible terms to "Service Before Self" as a way of life.

Every single person, whether they're military or civilian, enlisted or officer, white collar or craftsman, should and must know that they are important, that their job is important, and that what we bring to the Air Force and our nation is part of a complex, too-many-moving-parts-to-imagine instrument of incredible power, reach and precision.

I am incredibly proud of each and every one of you and assure you that all your efforts are worth it. Stay the course.

FROM THE TOP